

NOTES ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF NIGHTHAWKS IN UTAH ⁽¹⁾

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A study of a small collection of nighthawks kindly determined for Brigham Young University by Dr. H. C. Oberholser seems to warrant a few comments upon the distribution of the subspecies of *Chordeiles minor* in Utah.

For reasons to be indicated in the following paragraphs it is evident that considerable collecting and field observation must still be done before breeding ranges and migratory courses of the several subspecies are thoroughly understood. Far from offering a solution to these problems, it is the purpose in this paper to record certain information that will, it is hoped, shed some light upon the situation, and at the same time call attention to the need of further published records based upon collections of both birds and nesting data.

1. *CHORDEILES MINOR HOWELLI* Oberholser. Howell's Nighthawk

PUBLISHED RECORDS: *Chordeiles popetue* var. *henryi* Allen, 1872, p. 179 (Kansas to Utah); Henshaw, 1874, p. 8 (Mts. of Utah, breeding up to 7,000 feet.); Ridgway, 1877, p. 568 (Parley's Park and Uintah Mountains, Utah).

Chordeiles virginianus howelli Oberholser, 1914, p. 64 (Parley's Park, Wasatch Mountains (June 21, 1869, July 24, Aug. 13 and 16, 1869).

Chordeiles minor howelli (in part), Tanner and Hayward, 1934 p. 226 (La Sal Mountains, Grand and San Juan Cos., July, 1934; La Sal, San Juan Co., June, 1927, breeding).

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY RECORDS: One adult female; La Sal, San Juan Co., June 16, 1927; taken from nest containing two eggs (C. Cottam). One adult female; Warner Ranger Station, La Sal Mts., Grand Co., el. 9,400 ft., July 5, 1934 (C. L. Hayward). One adult male, Geyser Pass, La Sal Mts., San Juan Co., el. 10,600 ft., July 27, 1934 (D. E. Beck).

(1) Contribution No. 78 from the Department of Zoology and Entomology, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

2. *CHORDEILES MINOR SENNETTI* Coues. Sennett's Nighthawk

PUBLISHED RECORDS: As far as the writer knows there is no previous published record for Utah.

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY RECORD: One female, east shore Utah Lake, near Provo, Utah Co., August 29, 1931 (C. L. Hayward).

3. *CHORDEILES MINOR HENRYI* Cassin. Western Nighthawk

PUBLISHED RECORDS: *Chordeiles minor henryi* Presnall, 1935, p. 202 (Region surrounding Zion National Park, Washington Co.).

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY RECORDS: One adult, 10-mile spring, south of Escalante, Garfield Co., June 22, 1936 (D. E. Beck); one adult female and two immature young unable to fly, Jensen, Uintah Co., July 23, 1937 (J. W. Bee and C. L. Hayward); one adult male and one female, Warner Ranger Station, Grand Co., July 14, 1934 (H. Hutchings).

4. *CHORDEILES MINOR HESPERIS* Grinnell. Pacific Nighthawk

PUBLISHED RECORDS: *Chordeiles popetue* Baird, Allen, 1872, p. 179 (Ogden, Utah).

Chordeiles popetue henryi Ridgway, 1875, p. 30 (Salt Lake Valley, Utah).

Chordeiles virginianus hesperis Grinnell, Oberholser, 1914, pp. 49 and 51 (2 specimens, Buckskin Valley, Iron Co., Sept. 1, 1908, collected by W. H. Osgood; two specimens, Fairfield, Utah Co., June 21 and 27, 1890, collected by V. Bailey).

Chordeiles minor hesperis Stanford, 1938, p. 138 (several specimens Logan, Cache Co., September 19, 1930; Logan Canyon, Cache Co., July 29, 1937; Promontory, Boxelder Co., July 22, 1931).

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY RECORDS: One adult, Tremonton, Boxelder Co., June 27, 1931 (C. L. Hayward); one adult female, east side of Bear Lake, Rich Co., June 27, 1926 (C. Cottam); one adult male, Geyser Pass, La Sal Mts., San Juan Co., July 27, 1934 (D. E. Beck); one adult male, St. George, Washington Co., Sept. 11, 1933 (F. Atkin); one adult male, Ute Mountain, near state boundary, San Juan Co., Utah and Montezuma Co., Colorado, taken from a nest containing two eggs, June 23, 1927 (V. M. Tanner).

DISCUSSION

The nesting records of *C. m. hoveelli* from the Wasatch Mountains and from La Sal tend to substantiate the breeding range as indicated on Oberholser's map (1914, pl. III). However, the breeding ranges of *C. m. hesperis* and *C. m. henryi* appear to deserve considerable extension within the state.

It seems plausible to the writer that ~~*C. m. hesperis*~~ and *C. m. henryi* must extend its breeding range northward along the drainage of the Colorado and Green Rivers for a much greater distance than has been previously known. This view is substantiated by the fact that specimens were taken in San Juan, Grand, and Garfield Counties during the breeding season, and that a female with young still in the nest was collected at Jensen, Uintah County. The spread of this subspecies across the southern part of the state is indicated by Pressnall's report of its occurrence at Zion Canyon, Washington County (1935, p. 202).

The nesting record of *C. m. hesperis* on Ute Mountain near the Utah-Colorado state line and close to the southern extremity of the boundary would seem to extend the breeding range of this subspecies for a considerable distance eastward. Its breeding range in Utah was previously (Oberholser, 1914, pl. III) designated as the northwestern part of the state. The collection of this subspecies in the La Sal Mountains, eastern Utah, July 27, 1934, further substantiates its breeding in the southeastern part of the state, although the specimen taken there may have been an early migrant.

It is of interest to note that during the course of field work in the La Sal Mountains during the summer of 1934 nighthawks appeared regularly in the late evenings feeding about the clearings and forests at elevations of 9,000 to 10,600 feet. Six specimens taken from these individuals included all three subspecies as follows: *C. m. hoveelli* 3, *C. m. henryi* 2, *C. m. hesperis* 1. This information, together with the nesting data already referred to, seems to indicate an overlapping of the breeding ranges of the three subspecies in southeastern Utah. Continued and intensive collecting of breeding birds, particularly in the southeastern part of the state is greatly needed to throw more light upon the exact ecological niches of these birds that apparently breed in the same geographical area.

The specimen of *C. m. sennetti* collected at Utah Lake was undoubtedly a migrant individual. This bird in company with a number of other nighthawks was found sitting on the bare sand a few rods

from the water. Whether or not the other individuals were of the same subspecies cannot be determined since no other collections were made. The question of the regularity of the migration of *sennetti* through Utah can be answered only through future collection.

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